

In the Claims

17 (Twice amended). The method of claim 16, wherein said oleaginous liquid substance is selected from the group consisting of an oil and a transmission fluid, and said machine is selected from the group consisting of a transmission box, a gear box that is not a transmission box, and an internal combustion engine having a crankcase for holding a supply of lubricant and wherein said oleaginous substance is present in the crankcase as the [lubricant, and a combination thereof] lubricant.

19 (Thrice amended). The method of claim [18,] 17, wherein said inert gas of said inert gas blanket is provided from separation of air with a membrane-containing device.

20 (Thrice amended). The method of claim 19, wherein said oleaginous liquid substance is an engine oil; said machine is said internal combustion engine, and it is necessary to change the engine oil of the crankcase owing to the control of oxidative degradation of the engine oil, and the engine oil is changed, only after at least twenty thousand miles of use in [the crankcase of] said internal combustion engine, whereas, without the presence of said inert gas blanket, the engine oil would present properties of needing to be changed after a few thousand miles of use in said internal combustion engine in comparison to the engine oil protected by said blanket after said at least twenty thousand miles.

46 (Once amended). The method of claim 19, wherein gas enriched with nitrogen provides said inert gas blanket, and by-product gas enriched with oxygen is delivered for consumption to a location selected from the group consisting of [another] a

part of the machine other than said enclosed space, and a passenger cabin space.

47 (Once amended). The method of claim 42, wherein gas enriched with nitrogen provides said inert gas blanket, and by-product gas enriched with oxygen is delivered for consumption to a location selected from the group consisting of [another] a part of the machine other than said enclosed space, and a passenger cabin space.

51 (Once amended). The method of claim 50, wherein it is necessary to change the engine oil of said crankcase owing to the control of oxidative degradation of said engine oil, and said engine oil is changed, only after at least twenty thousand miles of use in said internal combustion engine, whereas, without the presence of said inert gas blanket, the engine oil would present properties of needing to be changed after a few thousand miles of use in said internal combustion engine in comparison to the engine oil protected by said blanket after said at least twenty thousand miles.

52 (Once amended). The method of claim 51, wherein it is necessary to change the engine oil of said crankcase owing to the control of oxidative degradation of said engine oil, and said engine oil is changed, only after at least fifty thousand miles of use in said internal combustion engine, whereas, without the presence of said inert gas blanket, the engine oil would present properties of needing to be changed after a few thousand miles of use in said internal combustion engine in comparison to the engine oil protected by said blanket after said at least fifty thousand miles.

Cancel without prejudice or disclaimer claims 54-60.

61. A method for controlling oxidative degradation of an engine oil in a crankcase of an internal combustion engine and delivering oxygen to a place away from said crankcase, which comprises providing said engine; providing said engine oil to said crankcase; providing a means for supplying an inert gas blanket of a gas enriched with nitrogen in comparison to air, which separates nitrogen and oxygen from the air to provide said inert gas blanket and provide a by-product gas enriched in oxygen; providing a means for directing said inert gas blanket to said crankcase, and blanketing said engine oil in said crankcase with said inert gas blanket to control oxidative degradation of said engine oil; and providing a means for directing said by-product gas to the place away from said crankcase.

62. The method of claim 61, wherein the place away from said crankcase to which said by-product gas is directed is selected from the group consisting of a catalytic converter assembly, a fuel injector assembly, and an air cleaner assembly for intake into a carburetor.

63. The method of claim 62, wherein the place away from said crankcase to which said by-product gas is directed is the catalytic converter.

64. A method for controlling oxidative degradation of an engine oil in a crankcase of an internal combustion engine and delivering oxygen to a place away from said crankcase, which comprises providing said engine; providing said engine oil to said crankcase; providing a membrane-containing device for separation of air to supply an inert gas blanket of a gas

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enriched with nitrogen in comparison to air, which separates nitrogen and oxygen from the air to provide said inert gas blanket and provide a by-product gas enriched in oxygen; providing a means for directing said inert gas blanket to said crankcase; under overpressure conditions, blanketing said engine oil in said crankcase with said inert gas blanket to control oxidative degradation of said engine oil; and providing a means for directing said by-product gas to the place away from said crankcase.

65. A method for controlling oxidative degradation of a transmission fluid in a transmission and delivering oxygen to a place away from said transmission, which comprises providing said transmission; providing said transmission fluid to said transmission; providing a means for supplying an inert gas blanket of a gas enriched with nitrogen in comparison to air, which separates nitrogen and oxygen from the air to provide said inert gas blanket and provide a by-product gas enriched in oxygen; providing a means for directing said inert gas blanket to said transmission, and blanketing said transmission fluid in said transmission with said inert gas blanket to control oxidative degradation of said transmission fluid; and providing a means for directing said by-product gas to the place away from said transmission.

530

66. The method of claim 65, wherein the place away from said transmission to which said by-product gas is directed is selected from the group consisting of a catalytic converter assembly, a fuel injector assembly, and an air cleaner assembly for intake into a carburetor.